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ABSTRACT

A "kinesiology carnival" was found to be a useful classroom project for university physical education majors working with elementary school children. In the spring of 1977, kinesiology graduate and undergraduate students at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro and 60 local fifth-grade students carried out a kinesiology carnival at the campus school. The major goals of the carnival were to present kinesiological principles of human movement in new and exciting ways to elementary school children, to encourage the development of critical and creative skills in both the children and the college students, and to provide the physical education majors with a first-hand experience in working with elementary school pupils. Prior to the carnival, the university students were divided into six groups for the preparation of six separate stations, each of which would employ a planned multimedia presentation of a kinesthetic principle. The students were encouraged to explore various teaching methods and resources in preparing these presentations. On carnival day, the elementary students (in groups of ten) visited one station at a time, rotating through the gym until all stations had been covered. Evaluation procedures were undertaken at the conclusion of the carnival. The carnival was found to be an effective, low-cost tool for providing direct experiential learning of both content and communication skills for undergraduate and graduate physical education majors. (Author/MM)

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KINESIOLOGY CARNIVAL: A NEW TEACHING TECHNIQUE

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The purpose of this paper is to discuss the usefulness of a kinesiology carnival as a classroom project for university physical education majors working with elementary school children. Within the past few years, there has been an increasing tendency toward changing the content of many undergraduate kinesiology courses, with the scope of content matter constantly expanding. Since there is so much material that can be covered, the instructor's task thus becomes one of selecting and, even more important, finding new ways of motivating his students to discover and learn on their own. One of the most basic educational principles is that we learn by doing, so to this end the authors developed the concept of a kinesiology carnival as a method for encouraging in their students independent study, group involvement, and experiential growth.

On April 14, 1977, 28 kinesiology graduate and undergraduate students at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, carried out with fifth grade students at the campus school a kinesiology carnival centered around the theme "Human Movement Needs Improvement." Sixty elementary students were involved in the project, as well as MTSU faculty members and campus school teachers. The major goals of the carnival were to present kinesiological principles of human movement in new and exciting ways to elementary school children, to encourage the development of critical and creative thinking skills in both the children and the college students, and to provide the physical education majors with a first-hand experience in working with elementary school pupils.

Procedures. The success of a kinesiology carnival requires the talents and efforts of many individuals working together cooperatively for common goals. Plans for the carnival began six weeks before the actual date with the organization of discussion groups of four to six persons each in the university kinesiology classes. In the discussion groups students were asked to decide what they would teach, what equipment they would need, and what their budget would be. Each group was to prepare a dynamic demonstration of a kinesthetic principle.

The groups decided to use the station method of presentation so that all the campus school students could be active at all times in the carnival. The station method involves the use of learning centers at which several activities--all built around a central theme--can be performed within a time period. The children must learn to operate within the pattern of groups traveling from area to area. The number of stations determines the number of student groups and the amount of time each group can spend at each learning center.

Six stations were planned, with ten elementary students to be assigned to each one at any given time; thus six different activities could be going on simultaneously. All stations would begin at the same time and continue until a two-minute warning sounded, at which time the leaders of that station would be given the clue to bring their presentation to a close and groups could then rotate to a new station. In this way each elementary student would have the opportunity to participate in the activities of all six stations within the overall time period. University students were instructed to keep the lessons planned in the mood of a carnival, using teaching strategies that would be fun and interesting as well as informative.

After preliminary plans had been made, the groups met to formulate behavioral objectives and choose themes. Group names chosen were the Prime Movers, the Kinesthetic Senses, the All or Nones, the Ballistic Movers, the Action-Reactions, and the Five Friendly Forces. The instructor reviewed with the students characteristics, needs, and interests of fifth graders so that they would have a better idea of what to expect from the children. Arrangements were made with the Learning Resources Center on campus for the use of cameras and videotape equipment.

Six group behavioral objectives were decided upon. First, the group should be able to present kinesthetic principles so that they might be comprehended readily by elementary school age children. Second, the group should be able to demonstrate these kinesthetic principles through physical and mechanical means. Third, the group should require the participation of each group member through cooperative planning, preparation, and organization of the group presentation. Fourth, the kinesiology carnival should promote participation by college students, the MTSU faculty, the MTSU campus school teachers, and the elementary students. Fifth, the kinesiology carnival should relate kinesthetic principles to everyday activities, sports, and games. And sixth, the kinesiology carnival should provide the prospective teacher with a practical experience in applying concepts to the teaching process.

The campus school teachers met with the graduate students at frequent intervals to discuss the topics and material to be presented. They offered suggestions to make sure that the information was geared to the elementary students' level, reviewed the behavioral objectives

set by the university students, and planned some teaching units around the carnival.

As each group progressed in its planning, practice sessions were held during class time to work on organization, timing, and themes presentations. Diagrams of potential posters, layouts of the learning centers, handouts, costuming, and behavioral objectives were worked out. Handouts included badges, booklets to be colored later by the children, cut-outs of various balls, certificates, and balloons. Practice sessions consisted of one walk-through with the instructor, one before the rest of the class, and a final practice before an evaluative committee composed of interested faculty members within the Department of Health and Physical Education. Suggestions made by the faculty for improvement were exchanged among the students.

During the last class meeting before carnival day, a combination dress rehearsal and posing contest was held. Pictures were taken, and final arrangements for transportation of materials and students were made.

Carnival day. The kinesiology carnival was held at the campus school for a two-hour period of time. The gym was transformed into a festive scene with bright colors, flashing lights, crepe paper streamers, bold posters, and interesting equipment, such as skateboards, balls, and balance beams. University students, many of them in colorful costumes, waited in anticipation at their learning centers.

At a designated time the elementary students were brought to the gym and divided into groups. More time was given the first group at each station so that the university students could have a period of adjustment. By the second rotation of groups, the noise and excitement

level were quite high and the elementary children could be observed actually running to the next learning center to find what was in store for them there.

At the conclusion of the carnival, follow-up procedures were planned to help keep the information learned fresh in the minds of the campus school students. Questionnaires were handed out to be filled in and discussed with their teachers, and a bulletin board display was provided for the school. All of the posters and displays were left at the campus school to remind the students of the carnival for the rest of the school year.

Evaluation. Immediately following the carnival a brief class critique was held. Since clean-up took top priority at this time, reaction papers were assigned for the next class meeting. At that meeting students gave verbal reactions and shared highlights of their experiences. Carnival slides were shown, and the students then completed individual and group evaluations. Included in the evaluations were a description of how preparation time had been spent outside class and how much money had been needed for materials and supplies. The overall budget worked out to be approximately $1.25 per university student, and the average amount of time spent outside class working on the carnival was 12 hours per student.

The instructor's evaluation of the university students was based on how well they achieved the objectives of the carnival through the learning center activities. To aid his evaluation the discussion groups formulated a list of criteria on which they wanted to be evaluated.

The authors prepared a scrapbook of photographs, news articles,

overhead transparencies, handouts, certificates, and booklets as a way of providing information for future carnival planners. In addition, a slide presentation was developed and videotapes of the learning centers made.

Summary. The authors found the kinesiology carnival to be a highly effective, low cost tool for providing direct experiential learning of both content and communication skills for undergraduate and graduate physical education majors. Many times the required beginning kinesiology course deals too much with theory and too little with application. The kinesiology carnival is a method by which classroom learning may be extended to practical uses and students may develop skills in analyzing and improving individual and group competencies. It is an opportunity for students to teach elementary children in a setting outside the classroom. The kinesiology carnival provides a variety of benefits for all involved and is a method of instruction easily adapted to many types of university situations.

For a free copy of our booklet "Kinesiology Carnival," instructors are invited to write the authors at Box 527, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37132.